

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 BONN 14440 01 OF 02 042053Z

66

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-15 MBFR-04 SAJ-01 OMB-01 NIC-01

EB-11 DRC-01 /150 W

----- 016598

R 042038Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7827

INFO AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USMISSION BERLIN

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 14440

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, GW, UR, XH

SUBJECT: WEHNER'S MOSCOW TRIP AND THE DOMESTIC FRG
POLITICAL SCENE

REF: (A) BONN 14122; (B) BERLIN 1697

SUMMARY. SPD PARTY WHIP WEHNER'S REMARKS IN MOSCOW
CRITICIZING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF EASTERN
AND BERLIN POLICY CONTINUES TO BE THE SUBJECT OF HEATED
DOMESTIC DEBATE IN THE FRG. THE SPD POLITICO'S
CRITICISMS WERE AT THE CENTER OF AN SPD-FDP LEADERSHIP
DISCUSSION ON OCTOBER 2 AND OF A HEATED BUNDESTAG DEBATE
ON OCTOBER 3. MEANWHILE, A GERMAN JOURNALIST CLOSE TO
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 BONN 14440 01 OF 02 042053Z

WEHNER WHO ACCOMPANIED THE FRG DELEGATION TO THE USSR

HAS TOLD US OF WEHNER'S MOTIVES IN MAKING THE ATTACK. OUR FEELING IS THAT THE HEAT WILL NOW BEGIN TO GO OUT OF THE ISSUE BUT WILL LEAVE BEHIND SOME SOURNESS IN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE SPD AND FDP. WHETHER WEHNER'S EFFORTS RESULT IN ANY MOVEMENT ON THE CONTENTIOUS BERLIN PROBLEM REMAINS TO BE SEEN. END SUMMARY.

1. WEHNER'S ATTACK IN MOSCOW ON THE GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF ITS OSTPOLITIK, AND SPECIFICALLY, THE BERLIN ASPECT OF THAT POLICY HAS CONTINUED TO BOIL BONN'S POLITICAL WATERS. THE FDP LEADERSHIP IS ANGRY AND THE CDU/CSU LEADERSHIP ON THE WARPATH, SENSING AS IT DOES THE POSSIBILITIES FOR SOWING DISTRUST BETWEEN THE COALITION PARTIES. THE SPD LEADERSHIP IS EMBARRASSED AND, IN SOME RESPECTS, DIVIDED. THE END RESULT HAS BEEN A SERIES OF CHARGES AND COUNTERCHARGES, INTENSIVE EFFORTS AT SMOOTHING RUFFLED POLITICAL FEATHERS IN PRIVATE, AND A CONFUSED DOMESTIC POLITICAL DEBATE WITH A HIGHLY EMOTIONAL CONTENT.

2. A RESPECTED GERMAN JOURNALIST WHO TRAVELLED WITH THE FRG BUNDESTAG GROUP TO THE USSR HAS TOLD US OF SEVERAL PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH WEHNER WHICH BEGIN TO PUT THE LATTER'S REMARKS IN AT LEAST SOME FORM OF UNDERSTANDABLE CONTEXT. WEHNER REPORTEDLY WAS INTENT, ABOVE ALL, ON ATTACKING IN AN OUTSPOKEN FASHION WHAT HE REGARDS AS BRANDT'S LACK OF LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE SPD. WEHNER IS SAID TO HAVE COMMENTED BITTERLY ON BRANDT'S UNWILLINGNESS TO GET INTO THE HARD POLITICAL BATTLES REQUIRED TO ASSERT FIRM SPD POSITIONS ON THE YOUNG SOCIALISTS, DOMESTIC REFORMS, STRIKES, THE MONETARY/ECONOMIC SITUATION, ETC. WEHNER THOUGHT HE HAD TO MAKE KNOWN IN A SPECTACULAR WAY THE SPD'S DISMAY AT THE CHANCELLOR'S OLYMPIAN, ABOVE-THE-DIN-OF-BATTLE APPROACH TO POLITICAL LIFE. WEHNER'S BEHAVIOR IN MOSCOW WAS TO BE SEEN, ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE, AS BEING PRIMARILY FOCUSED ON THIS SPD PROBLEM.

3. WEHNER HAD OTHER INTENTIONS AS WELL. WE ARE TOLD THAT HE AND OTHER PARTY LEADERS ARE CONCERNED OVER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 BONN 14440 01 OF 02 042053Z

BRANDT'S HAVING GIVEN UP CONTROL OF FOREIGN POLICY TO FOREIGN MINISTER (AND FDP CHAIRMAN) SCHEEL. WEHNER REPORTEDLY TOLD THE JOURNALIST THAT THE SPD NOW HAS TO READ ABOUT THE FRG'S EASTERN POLICY IN THE NEWSPAPERS, AND THIS IS AN UNACCEPTABLE SITUATION. THE SPD SHOULD BE IN THE CONTROLLING POSITION IN THIS FOREIGN POLICY AREA, IN WEHNER'S OPINION.

4. FINALLY, ON THE BERLIN LEGAL ASSISTANCE ISSUE, WEHNER SAID THAT HE HONESTLY BELIEVES THE FRG HAS OVERPLAYED ITS HAND. IT HAS CREATED AN ISSUE OF PRINCIPLE AND PRESTIGE WITH THE USSR AND OTHER EE'S ON A RELATIVELY MINOR ISSUE THAT COULD HAVE BEEN BETTER HANDLED QUIETLY AND CONFIDENTIALLY TO BOTH SIDES' SATISFACTION. WEHNER TOOK THE STANCE, THEREFORE, THAT A MEA MAXIMA CULPA FROM A SENIOR WEST GERMAN POLITICIAN WOULD SERVE TO DEFUSE THE ISSUE WITH THE SOVIETS WHO COULD THEN, WITHIN A CERTAIN PERIOD, GRACIOUSLY AGREE TO SOME

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 BONN 14440 02 OF 02 042114Z

66

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-15 MBFR-04 SAJ-01 OMB-01 NIC-01

EB-11 DRC-01 /150 W

----- 016749

R 042038Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7828

INFO AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USMISSION BERLIN

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 14440

REASONABLE COMPROMISE. WITHOUT THIS EFFORT AT BREAKING THE IMPASSE, WEHNER FELT THAT OSTPOLITIK AND THE BERLIN AGREEMENT WOULD BE BROUGHT INTO UNNECESSARY JEOPARDY.

6. WHATEVER ONE MAY THINK OF WEHNER'S MOTIVES, HIS REMARKS IN MOSCOW HAVE BEEN THE CAUSE OF INTENSIVE POLITICAL PULLING-AND-HAULING IN THE PAST FEW DAYS. ON OCTOBER 2, THE SPD AND FDP LEADERSHIPS MET PRIVATELY AND THE SOMEWHAT INCONCLUSIVE RESULTS OF THEIR DELIBERATIONS ATTRACTED WIDE PUBLIC ATTENTION. BRANDT TOOK THE POSITION THAT THE UPROAR WAS PRIMARILY THE RESULT OF "MISINTERPRETATIONS AND SUSPICIONS" ENTERTAINED BY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 BONN 14440 02 OF 02 042114Z

SECTIONS OF THE PRESS AND THE CDU/CSU OPPOSITION AND ADDED THAT THE ULTIMATE AIM OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ENEMIES IN THIS MATTER WAS TO CREATE DISCORD BETWEEN THE COALITION PARTIES. WEHNER TRIED TO EASE THE CONTROVERSY BY AGREEING THAT THE BERLIN AGREEMENT HAD TO BE FULFILLED IN LETTER AND SPIRIT AND BY REITERATING SEVERAL TIMES HIS COMPLETE SUPPORT OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES. FOLLOWING THE SPD/FDP MEETING, FONMIN SCHEEL TOOK A PUBLICLY MILD APPROACH TO THE DISPUTE AND SAID THERE WAS "NO REASON TO BE UPSET."

7. THE OPPOSITION, HOWEVER, WAS NOT SATISFIED OR MOL-LIFIED. CDU/CSU BUNDESTAG FLOOR LEADER CARSTENS ACCUSED THE GOVERNMENT OF HAVING ABANDONED POSITIONS IN ITS NEGOTIATION OF THE BASIC TREATY WITH THE GDR WITHOUT RECEIVING ASSURANCES THAT ITS UNDERSTANDING OF THE BERLIN AGREEMENT WAS IN ACCORD WITH THAT OF THE WARSAW PACT, THUS LEADING TO THE PRESENT DIFFICULTIES WITH PRAGUE. CDU/CSU DEPUTIES VON WEIZSAECKER AND STUECKLEN, WHO WERE WITH THE BUNDESTAG GROUP IN MOSCOW, REITERATED THEIR CONCERN AT WEHNER'S "REGRETTABLE" REMARKS AND NOTED THAT THEY HAD FOUND THEMSELVES IN THE "REMARKABLE" POSITION OF DEFENDING TO THE SOVIETS THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION TOGETHER WITH BUNDESTAG PRESIDENT FRAU RENGEL (SPD) AND FDP FLOOR LEADER MISCHNICK.

8. FONMIN SCHEEL REPORTED TO THE BUNDESTAG ON OCTOBER 4 IN A FAIRLY DULL ADDRESS DEVOTED TO THE RECENT ENTRY OF THE FRG INTO THE UN AND THE GENERALITIES OF FRG FOREIGN POLICY, BUT WITHOUT ANY DIRECT REFERENCE TO THE WEHNER CONTROVERSY. CARSTENS, SPEAKING FOR THE OPPOSITION, IGNORED SCHEEL'S ADDRESS AND REITERATED CDU/CSU CONCERNS WITH THE LONG TERM DANGERS OF CURRENT FRG FOREIGN POLICY AS CREATED BY EGON BAHR AND INTERPRETED BY WEHNER. CARSTENS ACCUSED WEHNER AMONG OTHER THINGS, OF ATTACKING HIS OWN GOVERNMENT FROM BEHIND AT

A TIME WHEN NEGOTIATIONS WITH PRAGUE WERE STILL NOT CONCLUDED.

9. BRANDT THEN TOOK THE FLOOR AND, WITH AN ANGER THAT SEEMED ARTIFICIAL, ACCUSED THE OPPOSITION OF DEFAMING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 BONN 14440 02 OF 02 042114Z

WEHNER. BRANDT SAID HE WAS NOT INTERESTED IN PLAYING WORD-GAMES OVER BERLIN AND THAT GOVERNMENT POLICY VIS-A-VIS BERLIN IS EXACTLY WHAT IT HAS BEEN. STRAUSS AND WEHNER HIMSELF ADDED SOME MORE HEAT BUT LITTLE OF SUBSTANCE TO THE DEBATE LATER IN THE AFTERNOON AND AFTER THREE HOURS THE DEBATE WAS OVER.

10. COMMENT: WE TEND TO BELIEVE THAT THE ISSUE, HAVING BEEN AIRED SO PUBLICLY AND HEATEDLY, WILL NOW BEGIN TO FADE FROM THE POLITICAL SCENE. THE OPPOSITION HAS GAINED SOMEWHAT FROM THE AFFAIR, HAVING MADE SOME TELLING POINTS AGAINST BRANDT'S LEADERSHIP (OR LACK THEREOF) AND AGAINST THE SPD'S HANDLING OF THE COALITION PARTNERSHIP. THE FDP, EVER SENSITIVE ABOUT ITS MINORITY POSITION IN THE COALITION, WILL BE EVEN MORE WATCHFUL OF THE SPD'S MANEUVERING IN THE FUTURE. AND THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT A SOURNESS IN SPD-FDP RELATIONS WILL REMAIN LONG AFTER THE WEHNER AFFAIR HAS FADED FROM THE PUBLIC'S ATTENTION. THE IMPACT THIS MAY HAVE ON THE FDP'S POSITION AS THE POLITICAL PARTIES APPROACH THE 1976 ELECTIONS IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT AT THIS POINT, BUT WEHNER'S REMARKS WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN BY SCHEEL AND THE MORE CONSERVATIVE GENSCHER WING OF THE FREE DEMOCRATS.

11. FOR THE SPD, THE WEHNER AFFAIR WILL PROBABLY HAVE LIMITED EFFECTS. BRANDT WILL BE SHAKEN FOR A WHILE, BUT PROBABLY NOT ENOUGH TO CHANGE HIS PATTERN OF LEADERSHIP. THE MORE THOUGHTFUL SPD POLITICIANS WILL RECOGNIZE THAT, ALTHOUGH WEHNER MAY HAVE HAD SOME GOOD POINTS TO MAKE, THE SPD NEEDS THE FDP TOO MUCH TO TREAT SCHEEL AND HIS COLLEAGUES SO ROUGHLY. THE RESULT WILL PROBABLY BE VERY MUCH A CONTINUATION OF THE COALITION'S WORKING HABITS, WITH SCHEEL CONTINUING TO MAKE THE RUNNING IN THE FOREIGN POLICY FIELD.

12. AS TO THE CAUSE OF THE WHOLE DISPUTE, I.E., BERLIN, THE ISSUE WAS OBVIOUSLY OF SMALL MOMENT TO WEHNER WHO REGARDED THE RECENT PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT AS SYMPTOMATIC OF THE DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED IN THE FDP'S HANDLING OSTPOLITIK. THE PROBLEM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 04 BONN 14440 02 OF 02 042114Z

OF LEGAL ASSISTANCE WILL PROBABLY BE CLEARED UP BETWEEN
THE FRG AND USSR EVENTUALLY, POSSIBLY AFTER SCHEEL'S
VISIT TO MOSCOW NEXT MONTH. BUT WHETHER HERBERT
WEHNER'S MEA CULPA HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH ANY EVENTUAL
SOLUTION WILL PROBABLY NEVER BE KNOWN. AND ONE MIGHT
WELL CONCLUDE THAT IT WOULD ALL HAVE BEEN SOLVED ANY-
WAY, AT SOME POINT AND IN SOME MANNER, WITHOUT HIS
HAVING HAD TO INVOLVE IT IN A BITTER DOMESTIC POLITICAL
CONTROVERSY.
HILLENBRAND

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 OCT 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973BONN14440
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731052/aaaablwh.tel
Line Count: 291
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: (A) BONN 14122; (B) BERLIN 1697
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01-Aug-2001 by boyleja>; APPROVED <19-Sep-2001 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: WEHNER'S MOSCOW TRIP AND THE DOMESTIC FRG POLITICAL SCENE
TAGS: PFOR, GE, UR, XH
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005